

(Continued from Page Twelve.)

The Castle of Lies

BY ARTHUR HENDY VERSEY
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CHAPTER XXI.—Continued.

"Bab! don't mention that word to me again. I am sick of your hypocrisy. You don't deceive me, let me tell you. Your plea of cowardice is a convenient subterfuge. Every fact points to your being in league with these adventurers. A coward wouldn't have taken the risks you have taken. You saw the man hiding in the stairway, you saw him about to die on a helpless girl; and you raised no hand. Am I talking plainly enough?"

I looked into Locke's eyes, glaring with rage and contempt, and I laughed aloud. It was actually a relief to have my weakness exalted to the plane of deliberate villainy.

"Laugh, my friend, but I am not to be deceived by a laugh."

"And now that I stand abashed in my naked devilry?"

"I give you five minutes to make a full and complete confession. If at the end of five minutes you still refuse, I shall have you promptly arrested for being a partner in the intrigues of the Countess Sarahoff, for masquerading as Sir Mortimer Brett, and for being an accomplice in the murder of Miss Brett."

Five minutes! The time was not long. I knew Locke would keep his word; but more than ever I was stubbornly resolved to refuse taking him into my confidence.

Could I tell him my reasons for acting as I had done? Could I tell him that I had set out on the romantic quest of saving a life for the life that had been lost? Would he believe that? At least without appealing to the woman who had set me that task? To drag in her name was impossible.

The minutes passed swiftly. So this was the end of my task! Disgrace and imprisonment! I had warned Helena that might be the case. I looked across the valley at the pinnacles of the Castle of Happiness. What a fool I have been!

"Your time is almost up," said Locke grimly, looking at the watch he had placed on his knee. "And Miss Brett is waiting in the garden over there. Do you wish her to see you marched off to prison?"

On the contrary, it was she who must set me free! I would put her to the supreme test. Now if she trusted me as she had promised, I might yet escape from the awkward dilemma.

I rose to my feet. I called to her, "Miss Brett!"

She came to us. My maneuver so completely astonished Locke that he stared at me speechless.

"Miss Brett," I said quietly, "Mr. Locke has taken upon himself the task of bringing me to justice. He finds me guilty of complicity in the intrigues of Madame de Varnier. He refuses to believe that I am acting in your behalf. I cannot blame him for his suspicions. The facts are almost wholly against me—the surface facts. I do not even deny most of them. But he has woefully misconstrued my motives in every case. I refuse absolutely to tell him what those motives are. He has threatened me with arrest unless I make to him a full and complete confession without delay. Mr. Locke, as I have said, is acting on the behalf of your mother and yourself. Personally he has no right whatever to make any complaint against me."

"Miss Brett will be the last person to shield you from punishment when she knows the truth," interrupted Locke, bewildered at my audacity in appealing to her.

"Among other things, Miss Brett," I continued eagerly, "he accuses me of being an accomplice in your attempted murder in the stairway."

"There are facts more tangible than that," said Locke significantly.

"But I refuse to listen to them," said Helena, reassuring me with a quiet glance. "I am not so ignorant of these facts, perhaps, as you imagine, Mr. Locke. I have every confidence in you, Mr. Haddon. As to causing your arrest, that is absurd."

"Thank you," I returned, with a passion of gratitude in my heart. "You will hear from me before midnight. If at the end of that time you do not, I think it would be well for you to consult Mr. Locke. He knows a great deal of which you are ignorant."

"Be sure of this, sir, I shall not wait until midnight to enlighten Miss Brett," cried Locke, his face purple with anger and chagrin.

"Mr. Locke, let us understand each other," said Helena, and even Locke felt that her decision was irrevocable.

"Mr. Haddon is my friend. I refuse to believe him guilty of dishonor, much less of deliberate crime. I refuse, and my mother will refuse to press any charge against him. More than that, we trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Locke closed the face of his watch with a snap.

"If you have come to that decision," he said with assumed carelessness, "there is nothing more to be said. I can be of service to you, you will find me at the hotel at midnight, as the chivalrous Mr. Haddon has suggested."

"We were alone, but Helena was of no mind to receive my thanks or my assurances that I had been absolutely

ignorant that Locke or any other had been in the stairway.

"Until 12 tonight," she said.

"Until 12 tonight," I repeated. I lifted my hat and walked swiftly toward the chateau.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt successfully the unknown. It was the vagueness of my mission that made it so perplexing.

One cannot tear apart lover from lover as one tears a piece of paper. And yet, if Sir Mortimer were living and still enamored of his mistress, I had promised to attempt even that. If, on the other hand, Sir Mortimer were dead, I was to essay a duty even more difficult: to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double duel. The first



"Until Twelve To-Night," She Said.

to be fought was Madame de Varnier, the weapons to be of her choosing, cunning and wit; the second, Dr. Starva, and he had already shown me what weapons he preferred.

To arm myself for my fight with him I supposed would be a simple matter. But when I made inquiries for a gunsmith's shop I learned to my dismay that there was none in Altherhoff. I was compelled to return to the chateau empty handed.

The terrace was deserted. I crossed it, close to the castle walls. I intended, if possible, to enter the hall unobserved by the little door under the winding staircase through which I had followed Dr. Starva. I looked cautiously into the great room through one of the mulioned windows. No one was about. Once within the chateau, and the door locked, I gained my room, and rang the bell for the servant. Jacques, the lackey who had shown me to my room the night before, answered the call.

"It is half past one," I cried impatiently. "Is Madame de Varnier not ready for luncheon?"

"Luncheon has been waiting for your Excellency. I came to your room some time ago, but there was no answer when I knocked."

"I had been wandering about the chateau," I replied carelessly. "So luncheon is ready. I hope I have not kept Madame de Varnier waiting too long."

"Madam begs to be excused. Luncheon is served for Dr. Starva and yourself."

I followed the man to the room where we had dined, not at all pleased at the conclusion that she affected. I was impatient for action. Nearly 12 hours were to elapse before midnight,

but there was much to be done before then. And if she persisted in not seeing me, I wondered how I was to force my presence on her. In the meanwhile I must attempt to learn something of Captain Forbes's detention.

I lunched alone, and well. The absence of Dr. Starva was only to be expected. Even so brazen a villain as he would hesitate to meet me with unconcern. During the struggle in the porter's lodge no word had been spoken by either of us, but certainly he could not have been ignorant of my identity any more than was I of his. When we again met, therefore, it would be as avowed enemies.

Frankly, I did not look forward to that meeting with pleasure. The fate of Captain Forbes pointed too obvious a moral. I had put myself deliberately in Starva's power by my return to the chateau. If I were unmolested it would be because my services were indispensable.

I had lighted my cigarette. Jacques was noiselessly gathering up the things I had determined to take him into my confidence. I believed it was he who had brought me the note. I suspected that he was not ignorant of my leaving the chateau. He had accepted my excuse too readily. At any rate, I believed the fellow could be bribed. I demanded carelessly:

"And Dr. Starva? Is he, too, confined to his room?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. Evidently he held Dr. Starva in no great consideration.

"One knows nothing of him. He is mysterious," said Dr. Starva.

I looked at the man keenly. The adjective was significant.

"Everything about this chateau is mysterious, it seems to me," I remarked cheerfully. "Last night, for instance, I could have sworn I heard the shout of one in distress."

"Is it possible, monsieur?"

"And when I retired I found a note on my pillow. I would give a hundred francs to the man who placed it there if I could find him."

"You have forgotten something," I said carelessly, and tapped the notes on the table. He hesitated; then, returning, snatched at them.

"When one has ascended the secret stairway," he said in a low voice, "one finds oneself in a bare room. That is the central tower. It is a triangle in shape. At the corners of the triangle there are three doors opening on three smaller rooms, the dungeons, as monsieur calls them. One of these rooms is the oratory of madam. Monsieur knows that madam is very religious. When madam is not to be seen she is at her prayers."

Again he seized his tray, but I had still another question to ask.

"Which of these rooms is the oratory? And in which does Dr. Starva lodge his friends?"

"But, monsieur, I do not know," he stammered, and again seized his tray. "You know very well, if you think," I commanded.

He rubbed his nose, a gesture curiously reflective and agitated. He turned himself about like a top as he tried, or pretended to try, to remember toward which points of the compass the various rooms faced.

"Monsieur knows that the chateau itself does not face either south, north, east, or west. The oratory is to the south. No, it points to the west. The locked room, Dr. Starva's, that is to the east. But no—truly, your Excellency, it is impossible for me to remember."

He fled from the room, the dishes on his tray rattling in his perturbation.

But he had told me much. I knew that if I could find the secret staircase to the towers, if I could force open the door behind the tapestry, I might bag both my birds with one shot.

Captain Forbes in his prison, or Madame de Varnier at her prayers—it was all one to me.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Terrifying Apparition.

I did not hesitate. There was no time like the present. This servant had been false to Madame de Varnier, false to Dr. Starva. He would betray me with as little compunction if it were made worth his while.

I walked slowly up the grand stairway leading from the hall. I gained the gallery that ran about the hall, meeting no one. I pretended to be interested in examining the designs of the tapestry. I tapped the wall as I moved deliberately along. It seemed to me quite solid in every direction. I began to think that Jacques had been playing with me.

As I stood there hesitating, Alphonse, the confidential servant of Madame de Varnier, appeared suddenly before me. Either his tread had been catlike or the secret staircase was very near.

I thought I read consternation on his face. I leaned over the carved railing of the gallery, gazing down into the hall.

"Am I not to see Madame de Varnier before long?"

"I shall tell madam that your Excellency is waiting."

"If you please."

I walked carelessly down the long corridor that led to my room. I closed the door, but I was careful to hold the handle in my hand, and in an instant my eye was at the keyhole.

He had passed irresolutely, looking down the corridor toward my room. Evidently he was dismayed at having been surprised by me. He hesitated, tating whether he should return to warn Madame de Varnier. Luckily he did not hesitate long.

He vanished round the corner of the corridor. In an instant I had followed him. As he lifted the tapestry he touched a spring. A door opened noiselessly.

"One moment, Alphonse," I cried. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Animals with Long Tongues. Grasses and ant eaters have tongues nearly two feet in length.

a letter, but always plenty of it on hand when he announces his intention of signing a check for his wife?

Postage stamps are so often stuck on themselves?

Life Ephraim Says—Ah wondah of dey'll let a black-handler lak me contribute to de Red Cross fund.

Life Ephraim Says—Ah hain't broke my New Year's resolutions yet—cause ah didn't make 'em.

WANT ADS BRING BIG RESULTS.

Marxian Club Socialists

Any question concerning Socialism answered. Address all communications to K. S. Hilliard, 436 Herrick Avenue.

Editorial Committee: KATE S. HILLIARD, E. A. BATTLE, ROY E. SOUTHWICK.

War its thousands slays, Peace its ten thousands—Porteus.

EXTRACT FROM AN OPEN LETTER DISCUSSING THE "WET" AND "DRY" QUESTION.

Fellow Workmen of Roanoke.—

On December 30, 1908, a red letter day in the history of the town, you voted and the "drys" won out. In reading the arguments and studying the tabulated votes for and against the saloon, I concluded that no longer being amongst you, I would venture a few remarks on the election as viewed by a worker.

In the first place, I am heartily in favor of any movement for the uplifting of humanity; but, although not a Missourian, yet you must show me that local option, or prohibition, alone will do so. If it had, what would be the necessity of sending missionaries to Turkey, Persia or India, where the religion of the people prohibits the manufacture or use of intoxicants? Surely, if the use of intoxicants is as the prohibits state, the cause of poverty, vice and crime of all kinds, then those people should be paragons of peace, plenty and pure morals. But is such the case? No! From all those countries come the cries of starving millions, of murder, arson and depraved morality, a cry which finds a responsive echo in the hearts of the starving millions of Europe and America, not for relief from the demon of drink, but from the hideous monster who absorbs the wealth produced by the working class of all countries. No, drink is not the cause of the evil; you get deep deeper and when you get to bed rock, you will find that vice and intemperance are merely effects which will continue as long as you permit the cause to remain.

Non-Alcoholic Countries. Why do millions die by starvation in non-alcoholic Brahman India? Previous to the British conquest thereof, the natives, knowing that there came years of drought, prepared for it by storing away in their public storehouses something against calamity. Under Christian England's rule, everything except a bare living is swept away from the poor people by the English capitalists, leaving the people penniless in the face of famine. In alcoholic Turkey and Persia the poor suffer the same fate at the hands of their own aristocracy. It is the same story everywhere, irrespective of religion, creed or color. The cry of hunger from Christian England's millions is echoed all over Europe, and reaches across the broad Atlantic to the broad lines in the industrial centers of "our great republic" under the reign of the "Old World" rule.

Again and again is the cry taken up in our Christian United States carried across her broad bosom to the Pacific slope, and on across that broad expanse of water to China and Japan. It's the same old story: the people suffer because the aristocracy as well as the plutocracy of the Old World and the capitalism of the New absorb all the wealth, except a mere pittance, from the working class who produced it. All that, and not drink, is the cause of poverty, intemperance, vice, crime and depravity of all kinds.

The conditions will continue and get worse year by year as long as the working class by their votes sustain the present system of capitalistic exploitation, be it in monarchical Europe, or in republican United States.

Society Dinners Versus the Bread Line.

As long as this system of exploitation of the worker class goes on, we have our Society dinners, where nude girls step forth from the pile when it is cut open and promenade the dinner table in nature's dress to the delight of "our" bachelor 400 in New York; "we" will have Christmas trees for puppy dogs, hogs dining with their mistresses from silverware reflecting in a beautifully upholstered cradle while the children of these who produce it all shiver in a freezing atmosphere either in their hovels or on the streets and men stand in bread lines waiting their turn for a cup of coffee and a roll.

Oh, the degradation of it, to think that a strong man able and willing to work is driven by starvation to exclaim: "Another day of bread and butter in alms a part of the wealth produced by him and his sure that he is blameless in this matter? Are you not the ones to whom those starved mothers and children of this country are pointing their bony fingers as they shiver in their rags at the street corners?"

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THE JOURNEY'S END

BOURNE TO WHICH NONE OF US TRAVEL ALONE.

"For No Man Liveth to Himself, and No Man Dieth to Himself"—Beautiful Allegory of the Last Dead Day.

The man was dying. His landlady, kindly soul, had sent for the vicar of the parish, and when the sick man heard a step on the stairs he strove through the agony of almost insupportable pain to unclench his hands and smooth his brow. As the parson—squat-figured and plain-faced—entered, the man smiled a twisted smile.

"Ah, padre, old chap, come to speed the parting guest, eh? I'm afraid I'm not a very promising subject for your ministrations."

But the clergyman, as was a man, so wasted no time bating about the bush, but came straight to the point.

"No, I'm not here to-night to preach, but—we've known each other some time, and lately I've come to look on you as a friend"—here the man turned his head away and grinned quietly at the cheap wall paper—"how is it between you and your God?"

The man raised himself in the bed. "Look here," he said, "I have lived my life without him and am I now to go to him whom I have defied whirling for mercy? I have lived alone and I die alone. Do you—"

He fell back in a fresh paroxysm of torture; the bedstead quivered like the shaft of a racing screw under the grip of his one hand, while with the other he fiercely motioned his visitor to the door. The latter, seeing his presence was, for the moment, useless, retired—to spend long hours of the night on his knees in the lonely vicarage agonizing for the soul of one he loved. When he called next morning the end had come.

The long agony was over, and the naked soul lay alone.

Only vast silence and illimitable space. The man stood erect and cried: "God! God! See me! Know me! Throughout my life on earth, I have transgressed thy laws, knowing thy will and thy power. Judge me. Cast me to the hell Thou has devised for me, and try whether, through all thy tortments, the creature will not mock at the Creator. Here, a man, I stand before the Almighty for judgment, alone!"

There came no voice, no stirring of the calm, clear depths, but the man was shaken by the question: "Art thou alone?"

Suddenly there came pressing on him from every side presences, faces. The face of a gentle lady, who, through all, had loved her boy—the face of a stern, gray-haired man, hoping ever for the son of his body—the sweet face of a brave girl, eating out her heart in lonely, trustful longing for the one she loved—men's faces, for the one she loved—men's faces, full of belief in the bright promise and friendship of old college days—children's faces—the brown eyes of faithful dogs—these all pressed him, thronged around him, while through his being swept the words:

"For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself!" Through space the cry rang out: "Have mercy, God!"

IS BELOVED OF ALL MANKIND.

Little Brown Jug a Favorite with Every Race and Age.

Mr. Meredith Nicholson, in The Little Brown Jug of Andrew, thus pleasantly discusses the moral qualities of the bottle and the jug:

"A bottle, while suggestive, is not inherently wicked; but a jug is the symbol of joyous sin. Even the soberest souls, who from at the mention of a bottle, smile tolerantly when a jug is suggested. Jugs of many centuries are assembled in museums, and round them the ethnologist reconstructs their races of men; and yet, even science and history strive they never so sadly, can not wholly relieve the jug of its cheery insouciance. A bottle of inferior liquor may be dressed forth enticingly and alluringly named, but there's no disguising the jug; its general shame can not be hidden. There are pleasant places in America where, if one deposit a half-dollar and a little brown jug behind a certain stone, or on the shady side of a blackberry bush, jug and coin will together disappear between sunset and sunrise; but lo! the jug, filled and plugged with a cornucopia, will return alone mysteriously, in contravention of the statutes in such cases made and provided. Too rare for glass, this fluid, which bubbles out of the southern hills with as little guilt in its soul as the brooks beside which it comes to being! But, lest he be accused of aiding and abetting crime against the majesty of the law, this chronicler hastens to say that on a hot day in the harvest field, honest water, hidden away in a little brown jug in the fence corner, acquires a quality and imparts a delight that no mug of crystal or of gold can yield."

Bloodless "Warfare."

English travelers on the frontier between China and Burma recently found the various villages at war with one another. One traveler, George Forrest, writes: "The men of JJJ were at war with their neighbors, and, indeed, we watched the progress of the fight during our trip. The cause was the theft of some money and a whole army corps, consisting of 50 warriors, had been mobilized. These fellows, with their grotesque ornaments of silver, deer horns, pebbles and cowries, their blackened faces, their flowing headdresses, robes, their war bows five feet long, their war swords five feet long, their broad oxhide shields five feet high, moved in a line beyond their village. The enemy occupied a position higher up on the hill and a fierce bombardment of opprobrious epithets was maintained, but neither side got further than sneering and stringing bows until the time arrived for the afternoon meal, when the combatants dispersed to their respective homes."

WANT ADS BRING BIG RESULTS.

GOOD PIECE OF ADVICE FOR A BOY.

"Bobby," said Mr. Kincaid, gravely, "always remember this all your life, no matter what happens to you: a man is never defeated until the very last shot is fired."

"And remember this, too, that even if he is defeated, he is not beaten, provided he has done his very best and has never lost heart."

DAILYGRAPHS.

Deliver me from a sputtering auto

mobile and a simpering husband, is the earnest prayer of many a woman. Men who kill time usually imagine that they are improving it.